2020 Election Participation in Ohio: A Focus on Hispanic/Latino Voters





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This report contains data from the latest research available. Upon request, OCHLA will provide any additional information or data available. For more information, please contact:

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Introduction

This report on 2020 election participation commences the start of an exciting new partnership with Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership & Public Affairs. This is a particularly fulfilling collaboration as Governor Voinovich created the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. We honor his vision via Dr. Anirudh Ruhil, Professor at the university. In fact, their demographic research is so crucial and timely, we shall include it as a key appendix on our Latino Community Reports henceforth. For example, in the 2000 decennial census, Hispanics made up 1.9% (217,123 persons) of Ohio's population of 11,353,140 persons. Just two decades later, Ohio's Hispanic population has doubled in size, rising to a total of 443,415 (3.83% of Ohio's 11,655,397 persons).

So, what can we say about Latino voter turnout in Ohio's 2020 election that took place in the midst of a pandemic? Nationally, as conspiracy theories and disinformation continue to spread alleging widespread voter fraud, what are the facts about Ohio's election security and integrity with respect to Ohio's Hispanic/Latino citizens?

OCHLA is a proud partner on Ohio Secretary of State Frank's LaRose's Diversity and Empowerment Council which serves as a bridge between the Secretary of State and Ohio's minority communities to strengthen relationships and promote engagement. We also supported nonpartisan voter registration drives in both 2016 and 2020 and implemented robust bilingual civic education outreach campaigns. Likewise, we worked closely with the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) on voter assistance hotlines to help Latino voters who had questions or encountered problems on election day.

We trust you will appreciate this original research which required unique methodology as well as complex data analysis to ascertain the enduring question of how elections participation differs across racial/ethnic groups. Most importantly, this report endeavors to answer whether or not Latino turnout was higher or lower given the COVID-19 pandemic, and all the other dynamics in play during the 2020 election.

Fostering civic participation and good citizenship are the cornerstones of our Commission's mandates. This research provides a roadmap for our public engagement and continued statewide deliberation to encourage Hispanic/Latino participation in local, state, and national elections.



The Nationwide 2020 Electorate

The United States is in the midst of experiencing shifts in the country's racial and ethnic make up with changes in political party affiliation, demographics, education, and religion. According to a report from the Pew Research Center, a third of registered voters (34%) identify as independents, while 33% identify as Democrats and 29% identify as Republicans with most independents leaning toward one of the two major parties. Non-Hispanic White Americans make 69% of the total registered voters with Hispanic and Black voters each accounting for 11% of the total and other ethnic backgrounds make up the remaining 8%. Likewise, 52% of registered voters are 50 years and older; however, the 2020 elections mark the first time that many members of Generation Z (those born after 1996 until about 2012-2015) are eligible to vote. Additionally, 64% of registered voters in the U.S. do not have a college degree, while 36% do. Followers of the Christian faith account for the majority of registered voters with 64% and the share of faith unaffiliated voters has increased to 28%.

The 2020 presidential election had the largest total voter turnout in the history of the United States with more than 159 million voters marking the highest in 120 years when measured as a percentage of the voting eligible population (66.7%). The election cycle saw a significant rise in voter registration and voting by about 18.7 million Latinos nationwide, meaning that 1 in 10 voters were Latino. A rise in registration was seen predominantly in Latinos ages 18-44 and among U.S.-born Latinos. Over half of registered Latino voters showed up to the polls for the November election— a historic first.³

Kamala Harris made history as the first female Vice President of the United States and also the first Black person and first person of Indian descent to hold the office. The 117th Congress has a record 141 women (26.4% of its membership) of whom 51 are women of color. People of color will make up about 28% of the U.S. House of Representatives with 43 Hispanic Americans, 16 Asian Americans, 57 African Americans, and 5 American Indians.⁴

Ohio Elections Participation: Hispanic/Latino Voters

A review of this report's appendix on Hispanic/Latino demographics is highly encouraged to provide a historical analysis and foundation to understand the dynamics and growth of the Hispanic/Latino population in Ohio.

¹Gramlich, John. *What the 2020 Electorate Looks like by Party, Race and Ethnicity, Age, Education and Religion*. Pew Research Center, 26 Oct. 2020, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks-like-by-party-race-and-ethnicity-age-education-and-religion/.

²Lindsay, James M. *The 2020 Election by the Numbers*. Council on Foreign Relations, 15 Dec. 2020, www.cfr.org/blog/2020-election-numbers.

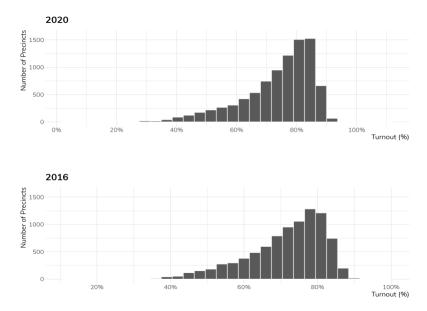
³Gamboa, Suzanne. "Over Half of Eligible Latinos Voted in 2020 - a Historic First." *NBCNews.com*, 11 May 2021, www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/half-eligible-latinos-voted-2020-historic-first-rcna899.

⁴Lindsay, James M. *The 2020 Election by the Numbers*. Council on Foreign Relations, 15 Dec. 2020, www.cfr.org/blog/2020-election-numbers.

Given ongoing debates about voter participation in elections, it would be useful to understand how participation differs across the racial/ethnic groups. Since the vote is in itself a secret ballot, it is virtually impossible to determine who voted for whom. However, we can both track and analyze voter participation in a specific election via voter registration lists maintained by each of the 88 county boards of elections in Ohio. The challenge that remains, however, is to decipher if Bruce Lee is, for example, an Asian voter or a Non-Hispanic White voter? Last names of individuals are of little use in identifying their race/ethnicity with accuracy because last names are not unique to a specific racial/ethnic group.

Researchers use a couple of accepted methods to try and assign each voter to a unique racial/ethnic group base, but employing these is beyond the scope of the current report. Instead, we employ a simpler, perhaps even cleaner strategy that involves data publicly available from Ohio's Secretary of State. At minimum, these data sets reflect total votes cast by each precinct, for each candidate running for public office, and the total number of registered voters in the precinct. This data goes back to 1940 but not with the same level of completeness. In addition, each decennial census leads to a redrawing of congressional and state legislative districts, and at times also leads to city council boundaries being redrawn, new city districts being created, or some districts being merged. Local voting precincts— the smallest geographic unit used for tabulating votes— change less often. Hence, while in the abstract we could analyze voter turnout at the precinct-level for several decades, doing so would open the analyses to errors. Consequently, we limit ourselves to the 2016 and 2020 general elections. Precinct-level population, turnout, and other data are drawn from data gathered by the Geometry and Gerrymandering Project group. What did turnout look like in 2020?

General Election Turnout by Precinct (2016 v. 2020)

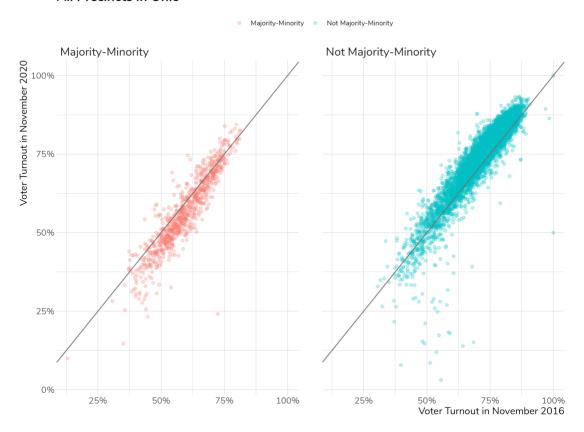


We start with the questions that is perhaps uppermost in most minds, or at least was the leading question up to the November 2020 elections—will turnout be higher or lower, given the COVID-19 pandemic and all the other dynamics in play in the election? An easy way to address this question would be to compare turnout defined here as the percentage of registered voters who

cast a ballot in 2016 to turnout in 2020. An interesting layer to add would be to distinguish between precincts with Non-Hispanic White voters making up less than 50% of the voting-age population (majority-minority), and precincts with Non-Hispanic White voters making up 50% or more of the voting-age population (not majority-minority).

Turnout Comparison by Precinct Type (2016 v. 2020)

All Precincts in Ohio

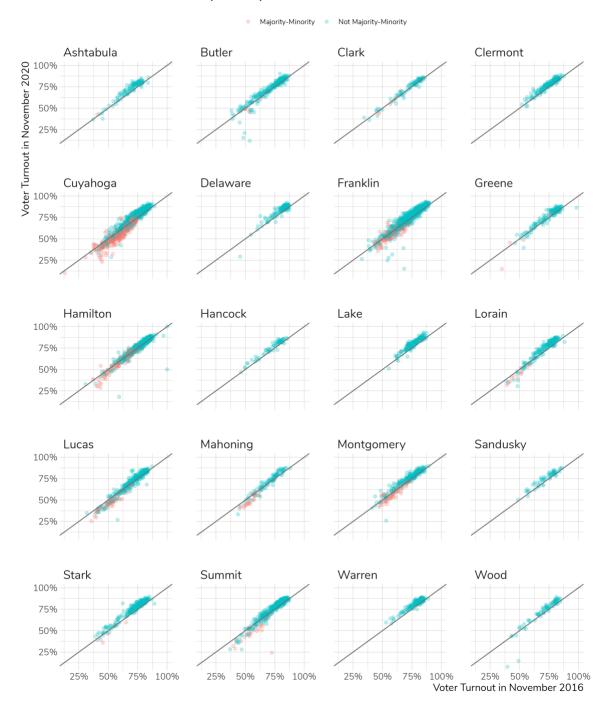


The diagonal line represents no difference between turnout in 2016 and 2020. Each point represents a precinct, and thus any point above the line reflects a precinct that had higher turnout in 2020 than in 2016. Similarly, any point below the line reflects a precinct with lower turnout in 2020 than in 2016. Separating precincts where Non-Hispanic White voters are a minority turns out to be very informative because it is quite evident that in these majority-minority precincts turnout was much lower in 2020 whereas precincts with a majority of Non-Hispanic White voters had much higher turnout in 2020 than in 2016.

But looking at the data statewide does not help us much in terms of looking at the behavior of Hispanic voters in the counties where they make up a significant portion of the local community. To do that we turn to a county-by-county analysis, focusing on the counties identified earlier as having a sizable Hispanic/Latino population—Cuyahoga, Franklin, Lorain, Lucas, Hamilton, Butler, Montgomery, Mahoning, Summit, Lake, Stark, Wood, Warren, Sandusky, Delaware, Greene, Clark, Hancock, Ashtabula, and Clermont.

Turnout in Counties with Notable Hispanic/Latino Presence (2016 v. 2020)

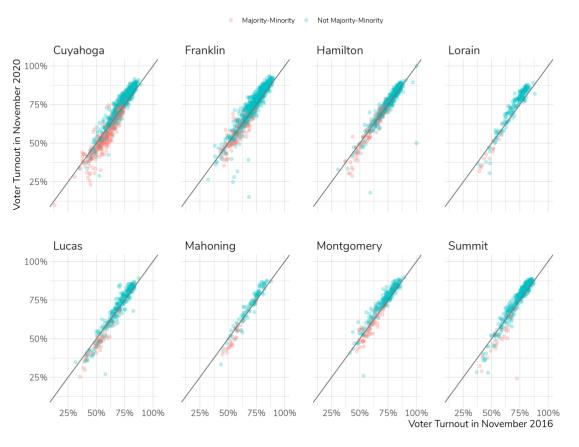
Precinct-level Turnout by County



Looking at all 20 counties shows the same pattern, as does an exploration of a smaller subset; on average, majority-minority precincts were more likely to have a lower turnout in 2020 than in 2016.

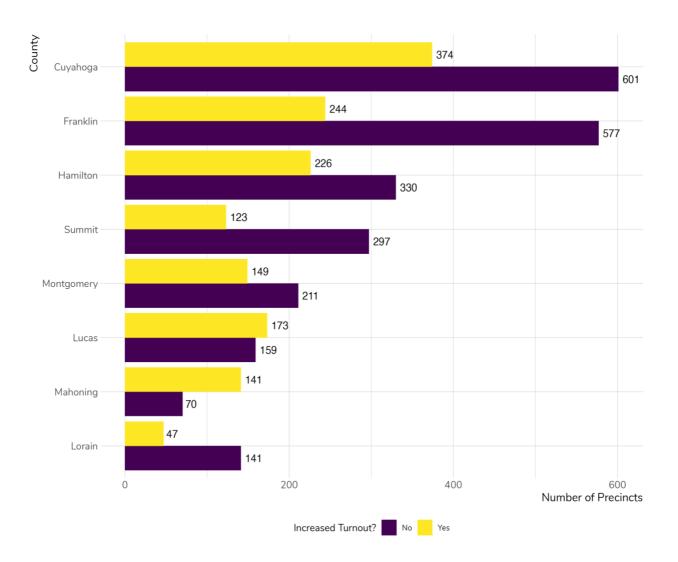
Turnout in Eight Largest Counties, by Precinct Type (2016 v. 2020)

Precinct-level Turnout by County



If you focus on these eight counties, what becomes readily apparent is that only Lucas and Mahoning counties saw more precincts registering an increased turnout. In particular, 52.1% of Lucas' precincts and 66.8% of Mahoning's precincts saw increased turnout. Unfortunately, we do not have precinct-level demographics beyond the estimated number of each racial/ethnic group's total population size, voting-age population size, and citizens of voting-age population.

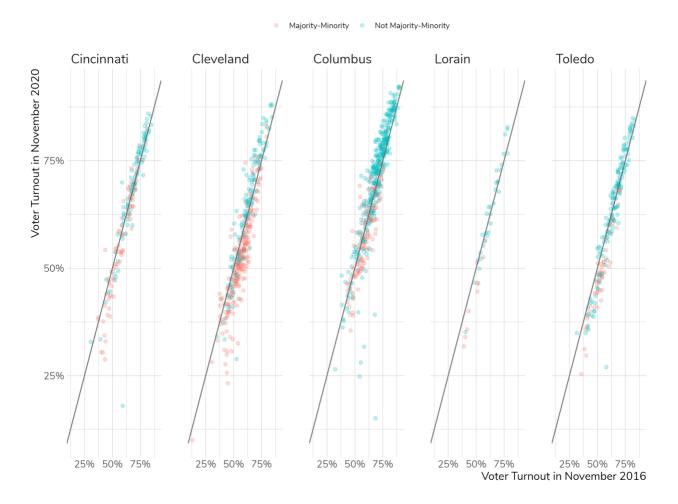
Number of Precincts Increasing v. Decreasing Turnout (2016 v. 2020)



Unfortunately, the data does not allow us to isolate turnout specifically of Hispanic/Latino voters and evaluate if they turned out at a higher or lower rate in 2020 relative to 2016. What we can do, however, is to come at this question indirectly by looking at the cities with a sizable Hispanic/Latino presence. Why cities and not counties? Well, because for more populous counties one ends up with too many precincts to extract any sort of a pattern in the data. However, if we focus on large cities, we can get around this hurdle. What cities should we focus on? Again, perhaps the cities with the largest presence of Hispanic/Latino voters—Columbus, Cleveland. Toledo, Lorain, and Cincinnati.

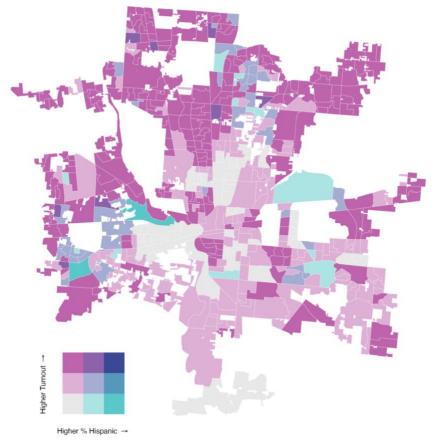
Maybe a quick look to make sure the pattern holds? Yes, it does.

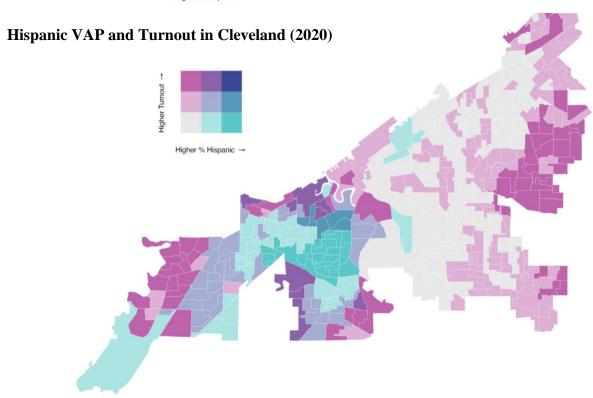
Precinct-level Turnout by City (2016 v. 2020)



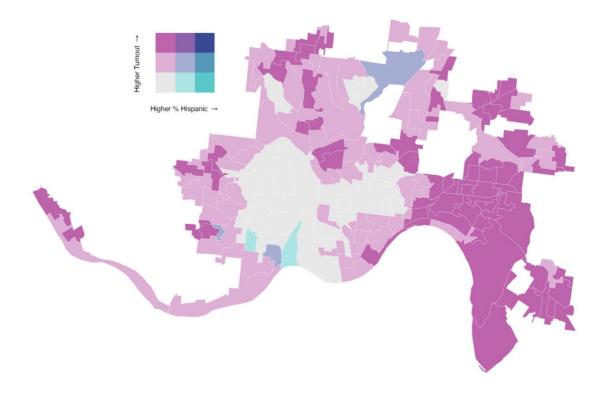
Now we can calculate the percent of the precinct's voting-age population that is Hispanic/Latino and use that estimate to map the percent of the voting-age population that is Hispanic against turnout in 2016 and 2020, respectively. A fairly straight forward way to do this would be to classify each precinct into low, medium, and high levels of Hispanic/Latino voter presence (relative to the total voting-age population in the precinct), and classify turnout similarly into low, medium, and high turnout categories. These maps would be best drawn at the city-level, and that is precisely what we present next.

Hispanic Voting-age Population (VAP) and Turnout in Columbus (2020)

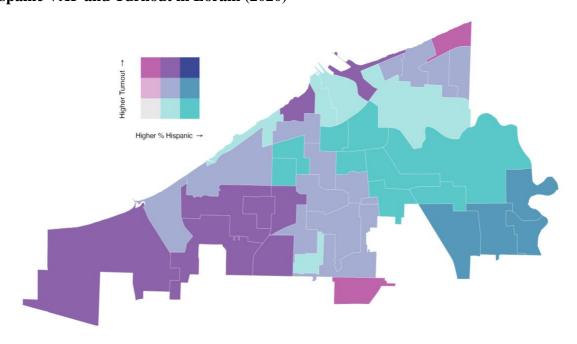




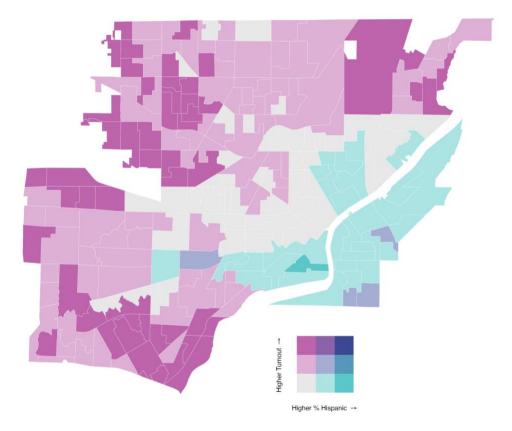
Hispanic VAP and Turnout in Cincinnati (2020)



Hispanic VAP and Turnout in Lorain (2020)



Hispanic VAP and Turnout in Toledo (2020)



There are some interesting patterns here! Take Columbus, for instance. We do see precincts with larger Hispanic/Latino presence with lower turnout; these are the precincts with the lighter blue colors. Had a precinct with the highest Hispanic/Latino presence in the city registered the highest turnout levels seen in the city, this precinct would have been shaded the darkest blue color seen in the legend. No district does so. Lorain is the lone city of these five that has a large number of precincts that approach medium turnout levels. These are the precincts in the Southeast quadrant of the drawn map. Toledo, Cincinnati, and Cleveland also show a clear pattern of precincts with a smaller Hispanic/Latino presence turning out at higher rates than precincts with a larger Hispanic/Latino presence.

Elections Administration in Ohio

Ohio is a leader in protecting the integrity of our elections while providing ample opportunity for voter access to the process. Nearly two decades of casting ballots by mail has allowed Ohio to establish a secure early voting process. Now more than ever, Ohioans need safe and secure options to cast their ballot. Whether they are voting in-person on election day, early at their county Board of Elections, or making their voice heard through the mail, Ohio has become a national model for election participation and security.

Ohio election experts and voting rights advocates are unified in one message to voters: vote and be confident that the ballots will be counted accurately and will be safe from hackers. Many local voters used new voting machines for the first time in 2020 and voting officials say their

preparations and Ohio's built-in bipartisan election oversight made sure the outcome from this past year's election was a safe and accurate count.

"It's very safe," said Aaron Ockerman, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Election Officials, to the Dayton Daily News. "It's all the same redundancies that we've had in place: it's not connected to the internet; you have a physical piece of paper that we use for auditing functions; voters can verify their ballots. The machines are always kept under double lock and key."

"We've worked really, really hard to make sure from a cyber-perspective we are protected from any kind of assault," Ockerman said.

In addition, said Ockerman, Ohio's "ultimate safeguard" for election integrity is that the state's elections are administered by bipartisan teams "so there's no partisan advantage that exists in other states."⁵

It is worthy to note that language minority provisions of the federal Voting Rights Act require that certain states and political subdivisions provide language assistance during elections for certain language minority groups who are unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process. The language provisions of the VRA were introduced in the 1975 reauthorization with the first listing of Section 203 covered jurisdictions being issued following the 1980 census. The determinations were released again following the 1990 and 2000 census as prescribed by law. The 2006 reauthorization of the VRA extended the language provisions through 2032 and instructed the Bureau on two changes: use the American Community Survey and conduct the determinations every five years rather than every ten as done in the past.

The language minority groups covered by Section 203 are those that speak Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Spanish languages.

Determinations for each state, county or county subdivision (depending on which is the operating level of government), and American Indian/Alaska Native Areas (AIA/ANA), are then computed based on the following:

• If more than 5% of voting age citizens are limited-English proficient,

or

- If more than 10,000 voting age citizens are limited-English proficient, and
- The rate of total voting age citizens that are limited-English proficient and have less than a 5th grade education is higher than the national rate.

Then:

⁵Hulsey, Lynn. "Experts: Ohio Can Be Confident in Its Election Security." Dayton Daily News, 18 Oct. 2020, https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/experts-ohio-voters-should-be-confident-in-voting-security/3V2QLIFGXFFRTA4E62EZHAP3HY/.

• The state, county, or county subdivision under consideration is covered for that specific minority group of Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.⁶

A bilingual Spanish and English population threshold came to be in Cuyahoga County out of a threatened lawsuit in 2010. The county negotiated with the U.S. Department of Justice and agreed to print ballots in both English and Spanish to better accommodate the area's Hispanic population. In a meeting with OCHLA, Elia Burgos, Bilingual Community Outreach Coordinator at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, said that the county continues to provide bilingual ballots. Elia and her team go above and beyond the minimum requirements in this realm by teaming with area civic engagement organizations like the Young Latino Network, Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates, and Cleveland Votes to help reach and engage as many voting-eligible Latinos in Cuyahoga County as possible.

Lorain County is the only other county in Ohio that as of 2012 is required to provide a bilingual ballot, said Lorain County Board of Elections Director Paul Adams in a meeting with Commission staff and Dr. Ruhil. Director Adams and his team also operate in an exemplary proactive way by having established a Spanish language advisory committee, training for interpreters, hotlines for information, and continuous relationships with local Hispanic churches and newspapers.

OCHLA and Dr. Ruhil also met with Tim Monaco, Deputy Director of the Lucas County Board of Elections, to discuss that entity's outreach to Hispanic/Latino voters. Although the county does not yet meet the population threshold to require bilingual ballots and workers, they do proactively order and provide English and Spanish voter education materials to the public as needed. Toledo has a significant Mexican and Central American presence and its local Board of Elections has 2 staff members that are fluent in Spanish. The office makes sure that at least one of them is on the clock typically with more workers during the 2020 election cycle. The Lucas County Board of Elections also mentioned engaging in regular interviews with local leader Linda Parra, Founder and President of WVZC 96.5 FM Nuestra Gente, to connect with Hispanic audiences in the Toledo area.

Innovative Approaches and Collaborations

In 2020, previous state records were shattered with over 8 million Ohioans registered to vote resulting in an all-time high 74% statewide voter turnout. Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose was one of just four Secretaries of State recognized by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's annual Clearinghouse Award, also known as the "Clearie", for innovative voter outreach and poll worker recruitment programs that led to Ohio's most successful election ever.⁸

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^{6&}quot;Section 203 Language Determinations." *The United States Census Bureau*, 5 May 2017, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/voting-rights/voting-rights-determination-file.html.

7Patrick O'Donnell, The Plain Dealer. "Bilingual Ballots a Must in Tuesday's Primary in Cuyahoga County." *Cleveland.com*, 1 May 2011, https://www.cleveland.com/metro/2011/05/bilingual_ballots_a_must_at_tu.html.

8"SECRETARY LAROSE WINS U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION 2020 CLEARINGHOUSE AWARD." 4 Mar. 2021, https://www.ohiosos.gov/media-center/press-releases/2021/2021-03-04/.

Historically, 65% of Ohio's poll workers have been over the age of 60, making the dangers of COVID-19 a significant obstacle towards making sure polling locations were fully staffed on election day. As a result of Secretary LaRose's groundbreaking poll worker recruitment efforts, more than 56,000 Ohioans were trained and ready to serve as poll workers, exceeding the statewide goal that represented 150% of the minimum number of poll workers needed on election day. This number was updated online weekly leading up to the election on Ohio's first-ever poll worker tracker to encourage recruitment.

Poll Worker Recruitment Efforts:

Poll workers' commitment to public service and their communities make the administration of elections possible. They help ensure that the election process at the polls is fair and impartial and that election laws set forth by Ohio law are executed properly.



Professionals Getting Education Credit to Serve

- Lawyers for Liberty Attorneys received required continuing legal education credits for being a poll workers this year. 1,072 lawyers served as poll worker under this program;
- The Accountancy Board of Ohio (ABO) allowed Ohio Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) to obtain required Continuing Public Education (CPE) general credits for CPAs serving as poll workers in 2020;
- The Ohio Real Estate Commission awarded three hours of core law continuing education credit to active and inactive Ohio Real Estate Licensees who served as a poll worker during the November 3, 2020 election; and
- Social workers earned Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) for serving as poll workers on Election Day.

Give a Day for Democracy

• Partnered with businesses to offer employees the day off to be poll workers. Many business, non-profits, and public-sector entities around the state joined this effort, including The Ohio State University.

Second Call to Duty

• This initiative asked veterans who took an oath to defend their country to defend democracy on November 3rd by serving as poll workers.

Youth at the Booth

• In Ohio, 17-year-old high school seniors can serve as poll workers. This proved to be a great way to engage high school students in the voting process.⁹

⁹"SECRETARY LAROSE WINS U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION 2020 CLEARINGHOUSE AWARD." 4 Mar. 2021, www.ohiosos.gov/media-center/press-releases/2021/2021-03-04/.

Voter Registration Outreach Programs:

The "Raise a Glass to Democracy" voter registration campaign began as a brainstorm between the Secretary of State's office and Rhinegeist Brewery. With Rhinegeist's creative support, more than 50 Ohio breweries signed up to encourage civic engagement and boost voter registration by creating a new beer and/or using the program labels. Many breweries had their beers ready for sale at their respective locations by early September, well ahead of the October 5th registration deadline. The label promotes the VoteOhio.gov website while also allowing each brewer to include their own branding.

Partnering with craft breweries, an important representation of Ohio small business, not only expanded outreach on the message of voter registration and updating current registration information, but also helped brewery owners and employees weather the COVID storm that many small businesses are facing. A map of each participating brewery was published and continuously updated for Ohioans to know which breweries were participating.

Secretary LaRose also launched "Styling for Democracy. Now Vote!" - a partnership with barbershops and salons, and the schools that feed into them, to reach more Ohio communities. For generations, beauty salons and barbershops have served as special places in neighborhoods of color—as much a social hub as they are an economic engine. They are places not only to get hair care services, but sanctuaries where neighbors can discuss issues of importance in the community. The partnership was designed to encourage community members to sign up to be a poll worker on November 3rd, register their family and friends to vote, and educate each other on requesting and completing absentee ballots. Resources were sent to more than 100 barbershops, salons, and schools across the state.¹⁰

The Ohio Secretary of State's Diversity & Empowerment Council

The Ohio Secretary of State's Diversity and Empowerment Council is a bridge between the Ohio Secretary of State and Ohio's minority communities to strengthen relationships and promote engagement. By increasing confidence in voting, entrepreneurship, and our state government, we will become better leaders, better listeners, and build a better Ohio.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose believes Ohio is stronger when every citizen is heard at the ballot box. Additionally, starting a business is the American Dream that can create generational wealth and lift people up to a better life. Secretary LaRose is committed to working hand-in-hand with members of the council and other leaders to better understand and identify barriers to voting and entrepreneurial success while building engagement strategies and solutions that increase civic participation among minority communities.¹¹

¹⁰ SECRETARY LAROSE WINS U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION 2020 CLEARINGHOUSE AWARD." 4 Mar. 2021, www.ohiosos.gov/media-center/press-releases/2021/2021-03-04/.

¹¹DIVERSITY & EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL. Office of Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, www.ohiosos.gov/secretary-office/office-initiatives/.

Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs Executive Director Lilleana Cavanaugh is proud to serve as part of this group to help make elections officers more aware of opportunities and challenges facing our community by further implementing culturally informed voter education initiatives in both English and Spanish.

OCHLA's Voter Education Outreach Campaign

OCHLA published bilingual voter education communications and public information updates through its networks, statewide meetings, and online throughout the 2020 election cycle as it has done in previous years. Working directly with the Ohio Secretary of State's office, OCHLA implanted a bilingual outreach strategy and the Commission also produced its own messaging and graphics with trusted and influential community leaders.

Communications and posts included information about voter eligibility requirements, voter registration deadlines, primary election dates and protocol changes due to the onset of COVID-19, nonpartisan resources for voters to research the contents of their local ballots, the various ways Ohioans can choose from to vote, a pronounced emphasis on absentee ballot voting and associated deadlines, polling locations, and what to bring to the polls in terms of Voter ID. Below are a few samples of bilingual posts from the Secretary of State's office and from OCHLA:



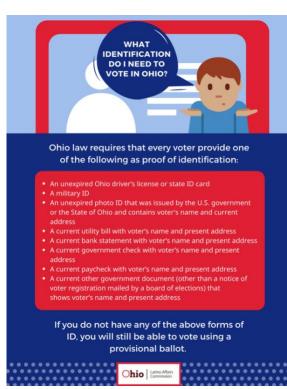




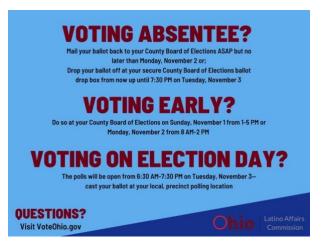


















In a 2016 Latino Community Report "Latino Elected Officials and the Evolving Latino Electorate in Ohio", OCHLA's arguments in favor of inclusion and its importance highlight the fact that "while members of a minority class are more likely to champion policies that reflect the interests of the underrepresented groups, the advancement of minority interests by like-minded members of the majority group should not be disregarded. Many non-minority elected officials effectively represent minorities in the policy process as well. These majority group members do so by effectively reaching out to their Latino constituents through public events and town halls in order to initiate dialogue regarding their concerns. Majority group members that effectively reach out typically tend to engage their Latino constituency within the political and civic domains. And while inclusivity on the part of Ohio's elected officials and public servants is important in order to create pathways towards adequate representation, it is far more critical to have the Latino community empower itself from within to mobilize its voting electorate." ¹²

 $^{{}^{12}}Latino\ Community\ Report:\ Latino\ Elected\ Officials\ and\ the\ Evolving\ Latino\ Electorate\ in\ Ohio.\ Ohio\ Commission\ on\ Hispanic/Latino\ Affairs,\ 27\ May\ 2016,\ https://ochla.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/8da6df20-8987-4d14-baa3-7091b95888b6/Latino+Leadership+and+Political+Representation+in+Ohio+LCR+2016+-FINAL.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_M1HGGIK0N0JO00\ QO9DDDDM3000-8da6df20-8987-4d14-baa3-7091b95888b6-nDDsBpO.$

As demonstrated by the increased statewide 2020 Election engagement, Ohio has made important strides to increase the inclusion and participation of Hispanic/Latinos through its poll worker recruitment efforts, voter registration and outreach efforts which increased opportunities for this particular population to actively engage in the elections process.

Coming Together: Community Feedback

In order to help the readers gain further insight into civic engagement among the Hispanic/Latino Ohioan community, we interviewed and sampled a few community leaders about their perspectives on election participation in Ohio.



OCHLA Commissioner Dan Molina of Loveland, Ohio in Clermont County is an Information Technology Executive who leads with community development and diversity & inclusion initiatives. He earned an MBA and a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Dayton. Aside from OCHLA, he is also a leader with the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, and previously held leadership roles with Prospanica.

"I serve as a Commissioner for the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. Our mission is to advise state government on issues affecting Hispanic Ohioans, to connect the diverse Latino communities across the state, and to build the capacity of community organizations so

they may better serve the fastest growing minority population of Ohio. As a young, Hispanic Professional, my passion was to excel in business and apply all the good principles that business teaches to the larger community to advance the greater good. Serving as an IT Executive at Accenture and an OCHLA Commissioner for the State of Ohio was my first opportunity to bring this passion to life on the scale I was envisioning. It is an honor to serve in both contexts."

We asked Commissioner Molina the following questions:

1. What is your view is on the power of voting? How do you engage the community to use their voices in this way?

As a member of a Cuban-American family, I perceive the power of 'the vote' to be one of the highest privileges of being a US citizen. As such, when the season of voting is approaching, I convened the Latino Leaders of Southwest Ohio with local, state and federal legislators to discuss the issues and team to increase voter turnout. This mechanism has matured to become a larger 'Latino Leaders Collaborative', which keeps the channels of communication open via a quarterly reconnect that allows for communication and actions associated with many different priorities, including strategies related to voting.

2. For Latin American immigrants who come to the US, become naturalized, and are now eligible to vote, how do you think they perceive the impact of voting in their home countries v. the impact of voting in the US?

This is precisely the track that my parents experienced when immigrating from Cuba to the US. Given the lack of freedoms (and the vote) in Cuba, the ability to vote in the US is one of our family's most prized and appreciated liberties as US citizens. When an opportunity to vote is approaching, we have regular discussions and debates on issues and candidates, which is an experience we treasure.

3. What is your perspective or understanding of the Cuban-American population in regards to voting?

The Cuban-American community is a passionate group, for certain. While Cuban-American views on various topics may vary, the ability to vote and voice a diverse set of perspectives is undertaken with vigor.

4. According to your perspective, what are the needs of the Hispanic/Latino community in your area? Which issues compel them to vote and become civically engaged?

There are a wide variety of needs in the local Hispanic/Latino community. Health, Education, Employment/Economic Development, Transportation among many others. All of these provide motivation in addition to candidates that are engaged and tuned to the needs of Hispanic/Latino Ohioans.

5. What are the biggest challenges Hispanic/Latino community members face when it comes to voting?

Challenges to voting can include logistical challenges (e.g., transportation), language barriers, identification requirements, among others.



OCHLA Commissioner José Feliciano Jr. of Aurora, Ohio in Portage County serves as the External Affairs Manager at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA). He is a proponent for Hispanic and Latino leadership and holds influential roles within such groups as The Hispanic Roundtable and The Young Latino Network.

We asked Commissioner Feliciano the following questions:

1. Please describe your role and the mission at the voter empowerment/civic engagement organization at which you serve.

I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Hispanic Roundtable. The three key focuses of the Hispanic Roundtable are Economic Development, Education, and Empowerment. We actively participate with our local Board of Elections and other organizations like the Young Latino Network who are training to get more Latinos to vote and, in the past,, we have advocated and fought for a bilingual ballot to be available in Cuyahoga County.

2. What motivated you to become involved in this mission?

Our community needs representation. We have strength in our numbers. Voting impacts funding. Elected officials must know that our community is paying attention to serving us, and they must be held accountable. We need elected officials who are going to help propel our community forward, not hinder its growth. Our growth is a key driver to the growth of Ohio's economic future.

3. From your view, what is the power of voting? How do you engage the community to use their voices in this way?

Voting is a right and a privilege that so many have worked to give us. It is one of the greatest gifts of citizenship, the ability to participate in the democratic process. The things that matter to all communities: education, healthcare, immigration, infrastructure, the economy, safety forces, etc. are all impacted by voting.

We annually hold candidates and issues forums to allow local candidates and those advocating for issues to engage with the community. We actively encourage voter registration drives. When we hold our every three years event Convención Hispana, we partner with organizations like our local Board of Elections to hold demonstrations on voting and civic engagement. In the past, we have sponsored training for community members to learn how to run for office and teach the impact of our voting bloc. We use our social media channels to raise awareness and encourage participation.

4. For Latin American immigrants who come to the US, become naturalized, and are eligible to vote, how do you think they perceive the impact of voting back home v. the impact of voting in the US?

I think here about people who do not feel connected to their community. They are less likely to be engaged. They have had experienced politicians back home that may influence how they view politicians. I think more has to be done to educate the populace on all the things influenced by your vote. If communities do not feel heard or seen, they do not participate.

5. What is your perspective or understanding of the Puerto Rican population that came here from the island in regards to voting? (For context: some have expressed that because of the way the federal government has treated Puerto Rico, for example after Hurricane Maria, that they are not motivated to trust the government in the US or participate in voting in the US once they move here from the island).

Puerto Rico's relationship with the U.S. is beyond complicated. Unfortunately, as a result of everything in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, it only became worse. I think many Puerto Ricans are beyond frustrated and disappointed with the response by the U.S government, and that has soured their desire to participate civically. Puerto Ricans enjoy all of the benefits of U.S. Citizens but cannot vote for President, and at the same time, they can die in service of this country. Definitely not enough time to really delve appropriately into this heavy subject matter.

6. Are bilingual English and Spanish materials provided to you by the County Board of Elections for voter education and outreach? If not, do you develop them?

Yes, thankfully, due to a consent decree by the U.S. Department of Justice, we have a bilingual ballot in Cuyahoga County. They have a very talented staff member dedicated to outreach, and they do a great job getting bilingual poll workers, helping to register voters, and driving civic engagement.

7. According to your perspective, what are the needs of the Hispanic/Latino community in your area? Which issues compel them to vote and become civically engaged?

Having a Latino candidate. Politicians who engage and help them to feel heard and their concerns validated. Any issue that impacts schools or health and human services. National elections.

8. What kind of support do you receive from government entities to carry out your mission? Particularly, this question applies to any collaboration you may have with your County Board of Elections.

We receive no financial resources to do our mission. Our organization is entirely volunteerdriven. We use whatever resources for outreach we receive from the Board of Elections, the Secretary of State's office, OCHLA, and other organizations.

9. In future election cycles, would you like to change or grow the work you have with your County Board of Elections and in some cases communications with the Ohio Secretary of State? What do you envision a productive working relationship with these entities to be in order to best serve Hispanic/Latino Ohioans?

It would be helpful further to develop our relationship with the office of the Secretary of State. We have had some quality engagement and look to build upon that. We would like to see more engagement by the Secretary of State's office with organizations that serve the

Latino community to explore ways to work together. Working together for the distribution of more bilingual materials and outreach at events.

10. What are the biggest challenges Hispanic/Latino community members face when it comes to voting?

Apathy, fear of the demonization and scapegoating of immigrants, lack of time, just trying to survive. Not feeling seen or heard. Lack of cultural connection. Immigration status.



State Representative Jessica E. Miranda of Ohio House District 28 in Hamilton County serves as a Legislative Board Member at OCHLA and provided the following perspective:

"The freedom to vote in safe and accessible elections is an essential aspect of our state and nation. Participating in our elections is how communities can improve representation and outcomes on the issues we care most about. Despite a global pandemic, Ohioans, as well as voters nationwide, showed up in record numbers in 2020 to freely cast their ballots. We must work to improve on this success to ensure that ballot access is strengthened by offering more opportunities to vote by mail or to early vote, protect voters from being purged from the rolls, make it easier to register Ohioans to vote, and ensure the people are choosing their representatives – not the other way around."



State Senator Tina Maharath of Ohio Senate District 3 in Franklin County also serves as a Legislative Board Member at OCHLA and provided the following statement:

"Despite a global pandemic, more Ohioans voted in the 2020 election than in any before, with 74 percent of registered voters casting a ballot. While this is a remarkable success, this achievement was enabled through the widespread use of absentee and early voting. In Ohio in 2020, early and absentee voting increased by 75 percent since the 2016 election. It is clear that providing voters with more options for how and when to vote results in higher voter participation.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, just this year 22 new laws have been passed in 14 states restricting ballot access. Many of these laws have to do

with restricting mail-in voting, which was a leading factor in what made the 2020 election so successful in Ohio in the first place. We should be doing more to enable as many eligible Ohioans to vote as possible, not restricting our elections to those with a certain background or voting pattern."

Conclusion

Ohio has a proven history of continuing to build upon its framework of secure, accessible, and exciting election processes. The state commendably saw its highest voter turnout rate ever in 2020 and as we work to keep as much of that momentum going as possible in future election cycles, elections officials and civic engagement leaders need to further proactively engage with the fast-growing minority populations of Ohio. These Ohioans come from various countries of origin with their own histories of democracy or lack there-of, language backgrounds, education levels, income levels, residential statuses, and transportation reliabilities.

The state should also work to develop a more reliable way to decipher the racial/ethnic breakdown of voter and candidate lists to better be able to pinpoint which demographic groups are voting, where, and who is running for office. It is important to further explore the issues that drive Latino voters to the polls and compel them to seek representing their fellow community members in government. Surely these topics have evolved somewhat since OCHLA's 2016
Ohio.

A major takeaway of our analysis is that although generally Ohio had a very high voter turnout rate in 2020, studied precincts in the state with a larger Hispanic/Latino Ohioan presence showed to have lower turnout rates. With Hispanics/Latinos being the fastest growing minority population in the state and about half of them being eligible to vote, we should continue to find innovative and collaborative ways to make sure this community knows that their voices matter and how to make that evident at the ballot box. Elections officials at the state and county levels of government should continue, if not already in place, working to develop proactive minority outreach strategies for future election cycles. In partnership with trusted local leaders and community members, we can all work together to make Ohio elections more inclusive.

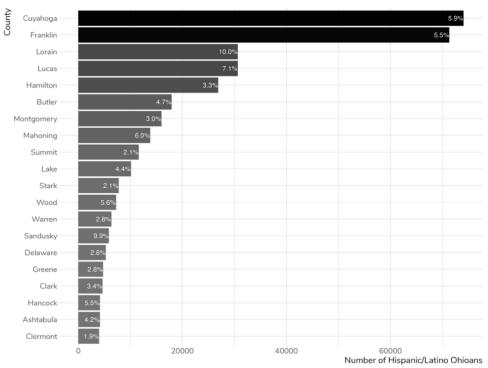
The Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs will continue its work to increase the representation and civic engagement of Latinos throughout the state. We will engage with Latino elected officials and support the work of grassroots and non-profit organizations invested in voter registration and education. Additionally, we will continue tracking legislation that affects the Latino community and further engage with Ohio's elected and public officials to better understand the potential of the Latino community in Ohio and to work through specific challenges that impact their ability to be actively and fully engaged in the democratic process.

APPENDIX: HISPANIC/LATINO OHIOAN DEMOGRAPHICS

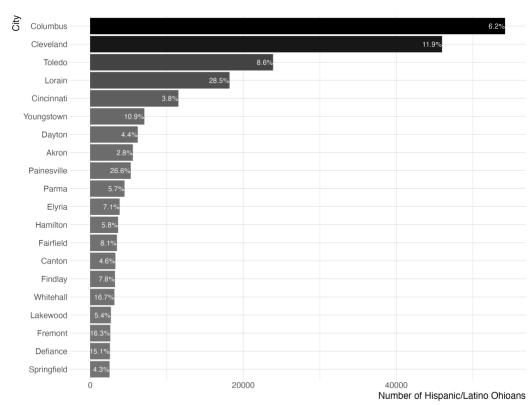
In terms of the size of its Hispanic/Latino population as of 2019, Ohio ranked 23rd among the 50 states, Washington DC, and Puerto Rico, dropping two spots since the 2000 decennial census. In 2000, Hispanics or Latinos made up 1.91% (217,123 persons) of Ohio's population of 11,353,140 persons. At that time, Defiance (7.23%), Sandusky (6.96%), Lorain (6.91%), Fulton (5.75%), and Henry (5.39%) counties were the five counties with the largest relative Hispanic/Latino presence. In terms of absolute population size, of course, Cuyahoga (47,078 persons, amounting to 3.37%), Franklin (24,279 persons, amounting to 2.27%), Lucas (20,670 persons, amounting to 4.54%), and Lorain (19,676 persons, amounting to 6.91%) counties led the rest of the state. Among cities with 10,000 or more persons of Hispanics/Latino descent, Hispanic/Latino presence was notable Lorain (14,438 persons, amounting to 21.03% of the city's population), Cleveland (34,728, amounting to 7.26%), Toledo (17,141 persons, amounting to 5.47%), and Columbus (17,471 persons, amounting to 2.46%).

Almost two decades later in Ohio, as measured by the 2015-2019 American Community Survey, the Hispanic/Latino population had doubled in size, rising to a total of 443,415 (3.83% of Ohio's 11,655,397). Defiance county had increased the relative size of its Hispanic/Latino population to 9.97% (3,804 persons), with Lorain county (9.95%, 30,628 persons), Sandusky county (9.92%, 5,858 persons), Fulton county (8.73%, 3,689 persons), and Henry county (7.68%, 2,089 persons) also showing relative increases. Over the same period, Cuyahoga now was home to 74,024 (5.93%) Hispanics/Latinos, while Franklin (71,292 persons, amounting to 5.52%), Lorain (30,628 persons, amounting to 9.96%), and Lucas (30,622 persons, amounting to 7.10%) were the other counties with a significant Hispanic/Latino presence.

Twenty Counties with the Most Hispanic/Latino Ohioans (2015-2019)



Data: American Community Survey 2015-2019



Twenty Cities with the Most Hispanic/Latino Ohioans (2015-2019)

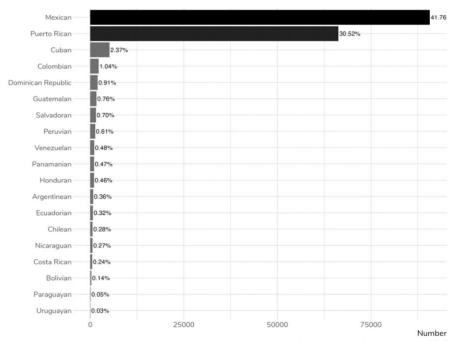
Data: American Community Survey 2015-2019

Columbus led the cities, with 54,201 (6.17%) Hispanics/Latinos, followed by Cleveland (45,970 persons, amounting to 11.93%), Toledo (23,896 persons, amounting to 8.64%), Lorain (18,189 persons, amounting to 28.6%), and Cincinnati (11,509 persons, amounting to 3.82%). Four of the 20 Ohio cities with the largest Hispanic/Latino populations are majority-minority cities (i.e., cities where Non-Hispanic Whites comprise less than 50% of the total population). Lorain, Painesville, and Dayton are three cities next most likely to become majority-minority cities.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

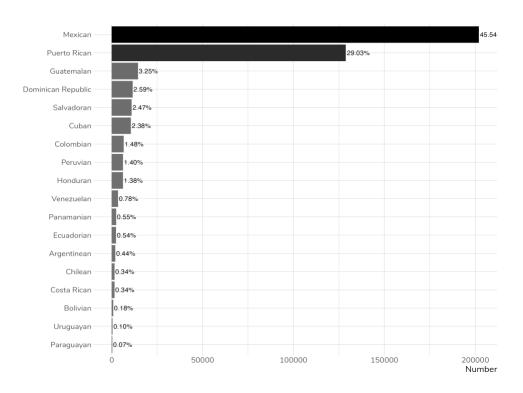
Where have Hispanic/Latino Ohioans moved from and how has this changed over the last two decades? Again, we first explore the data from the 2000 decennial census and then shift to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey. The Mexican (90,663 in 2000 and 201,921 in 2015-2019) and the Puerto Rican (66,269 in 2000 and 128,745 in 2015-2019) communities have made up the largest share of our Hispanic/Latino community since 2000. Whereas the Cuban community ranked third in 2000 (5,152), by 2015-2019 the Guatemalan (14,423), the Dominican Republican (11,483), and the Salvadoran (10,964) communities were ranked third through fifth, with Cuban Ohioans (10,549) ranking sixth in community size. The shifts over time are shown in the figures below. Note that the percentages displayed reflect the relative size of each community in the state's total Hispanic/Latino population in the measurement year.

Distribution of Origin of Hispanic/Latino Ohioans (2000)



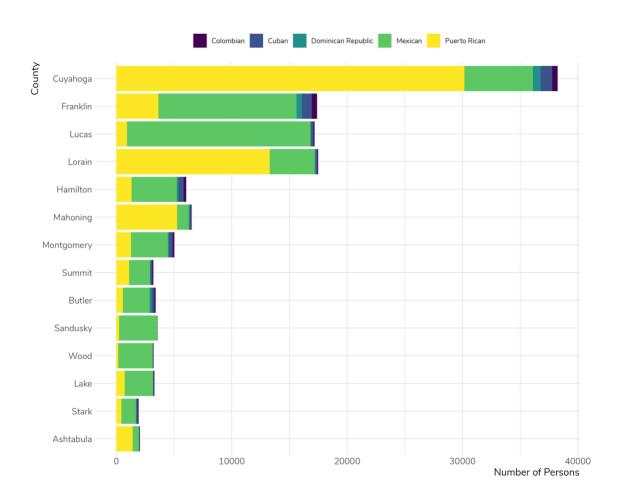
Data: Decennial Census of Population and Housing 2000

Distribution of Origin of Hispanic/Latino Ohioans (2015-2019)

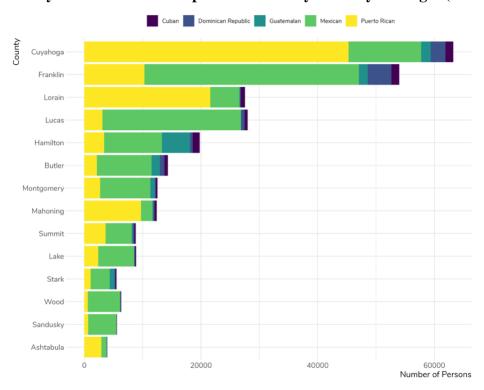


If we focus on the counties with the greatest number of Hispanic/Latino Ohioans, we see a clear difference: The Puerto Rican community comprises the majority of the Hispanic/Latino population in Cuyahoga (47,078 persons, comprising 64.0% of all Hispanics/Latinos in the county), Lorain (19,675 persons comprising 67.5% of all Hispanics/Latinos in the county), Mahoning (5,257 persons, 68.8%), and Ashtabula (1,405 persons, 61.3%) counties. In contrast, the Mexican community is the largest Hispanic/Latino community in all the other counties displayed in the figures below. Notice as well the generally similar distributions of countries of Origin over the 2000 and 2005-2019 period. What is perhaps the greatest change evident in these figures is in the growing size of the Hispanic/Latino population in Franklin. This is hardly surprising given that Columbus has been the fastest growing metropolitan area in Ohio for some time now.

By County: Distribution of Hispanics/Latinos by Country of Origin (2000)

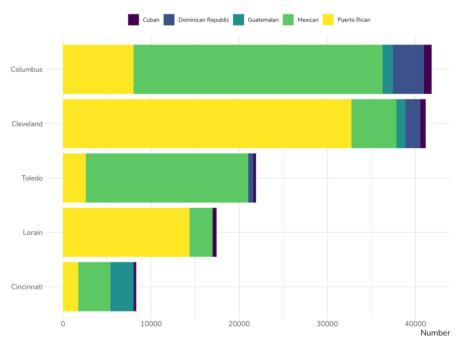


By County: Distribution of Hispanics/Latinos by Country of Origin (2015-2019)



By City: Distribution of Hispanics/Latinos by Country of Origin (2015-2019)

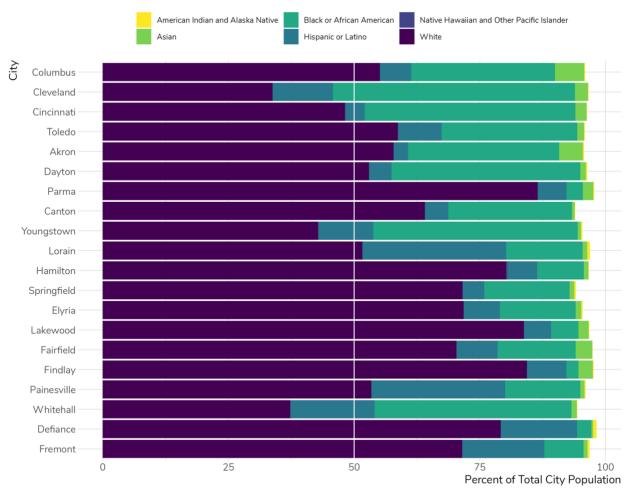
Note also that only the five cities with the largest Hispanic/Latino population are shown



Data: American Community Survey (2015-2019)

Of course, one interesting question would be if cities that are home to the majority of our Hispanic/Latino Ohioans are also racially/ethnically very diverse. That this is indeed the case is evident in the figure below where we show the relative size of each community, measured in terms of their share of the total city population (2015-2019). The vertical white line marks the 50% boundary, and this is useful because it allows us to quickly identify cities where Non-Hispanic White Ohioans comprise the majority or the minority. Quite clearly Cleveland, Youngstown, and Whitehall are majority-minority cities, with Painesville, Lorain, Dayton, and Columbus on the verge of becoming majority-minority cities (assuming the trend in population growth/decline continues).

Racial and Ethnic Composition of These 20 Cities (2015-2019)



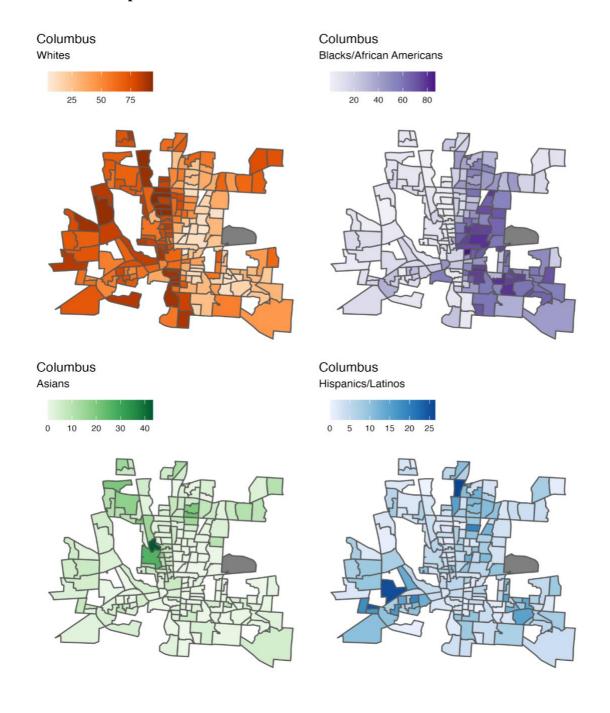
Data: American Community Survey (2015-2019)

RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

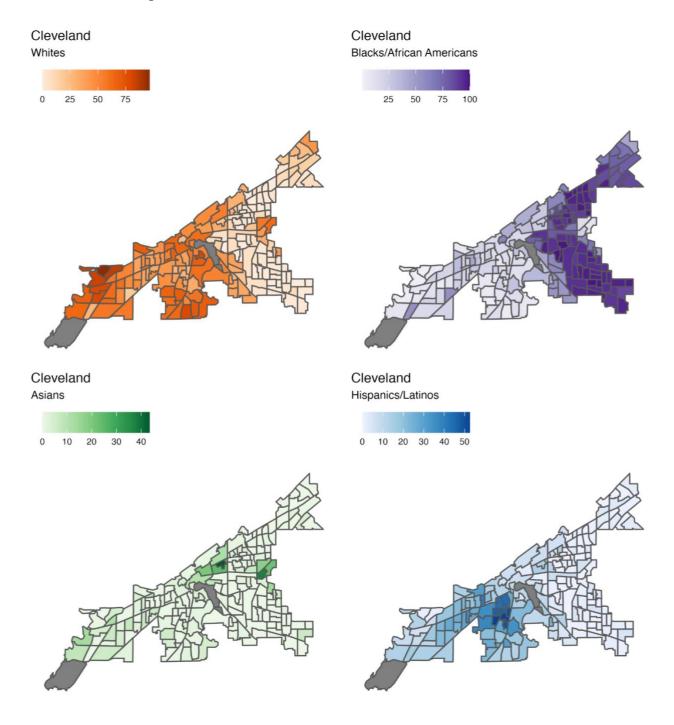
If we focus on the five cities home to most Hispanics/Latinos, what does the White, Black or African American, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino population distribution look like in the cities' census tracts? This is an important question given the consistent history of residential segregation that marks our nation's history. The maps that follow have been drawn for only the

four most populous racial/ethnic groups in these cities. Each map represents a particular racial/ethnic group, with shaded tracts reflecting the size of the racial/ethnic group in the tract. As size increases, the color darkens. These maps are useful to compare across groups within each city. Take the city of Lorain, for example. Notice that the census tract where Non-Hispanic Whites dominate has very few Blacks/African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics/Latinos.

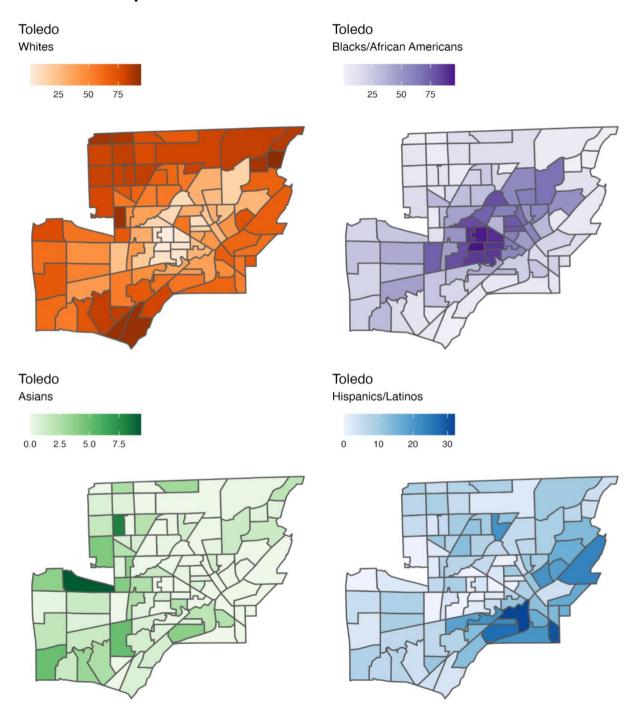
Racial/Ethnic Composition of Columbus' Census Tracts



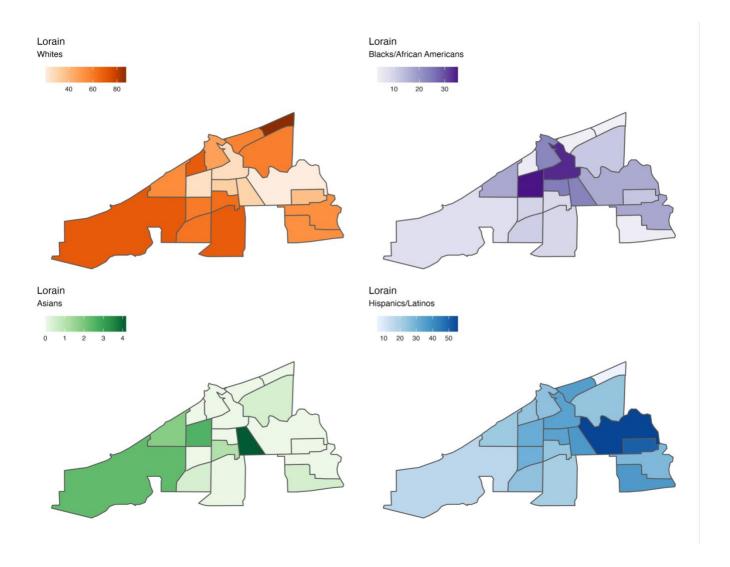
Racial/Ethnic Composition of Cleveland's Census Tracts



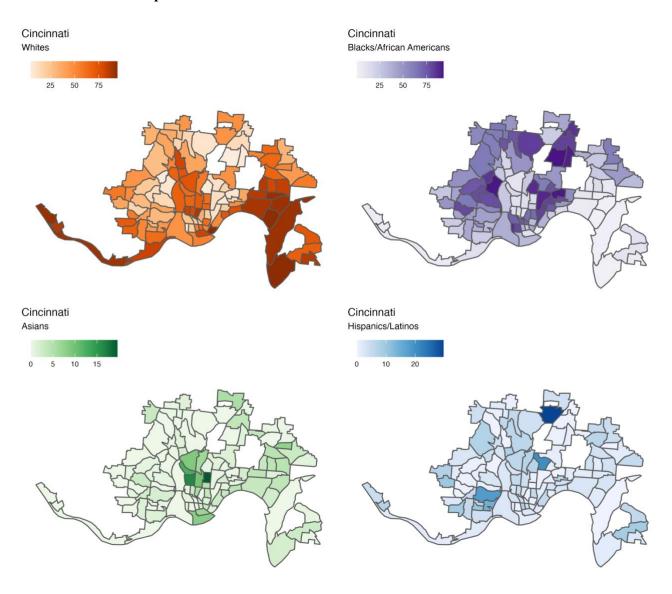
Racial/Ethnic Composition of Toledo's Census Tracts



Racial/Ethnic Composition of Lorain's Census Tracts



Racial/Ethnic Composition of Cincinnati's Census Tracts

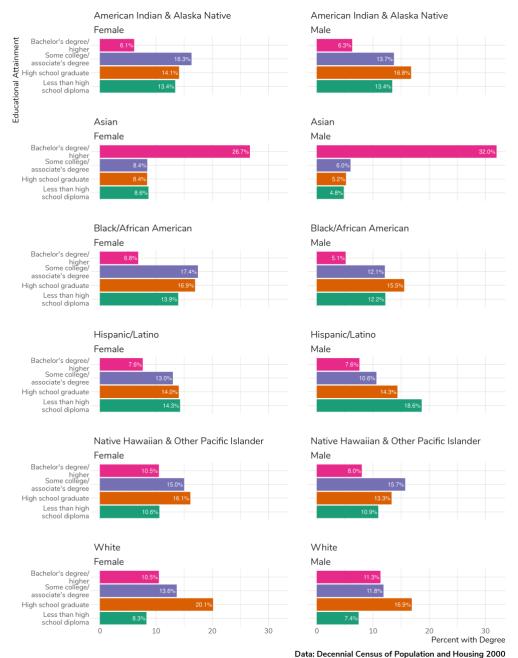


EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Educational attainment is another useful indicator of social and economic progress, invariably tied to employment opportunities and income. Given that we have had a few economic disasters between 2000 and 2019, it would be very instructive to evaluate trends in educational attainment over this time period. In 2000, adults 25 years of age or older were most likely to have a high school graduation diploma, or then some college/associate's degree (see figure on next page and note that the percentages have been calculated for the racial/ethnic group as a whole). This was true for all racial/ethnic groups in Ohio except for Asians (who were most likely to hold a Bachelor's or a graduate/professional degree). Indeed, 26.7% of male and 32% of female Asians had at least a Bachelor's degree.

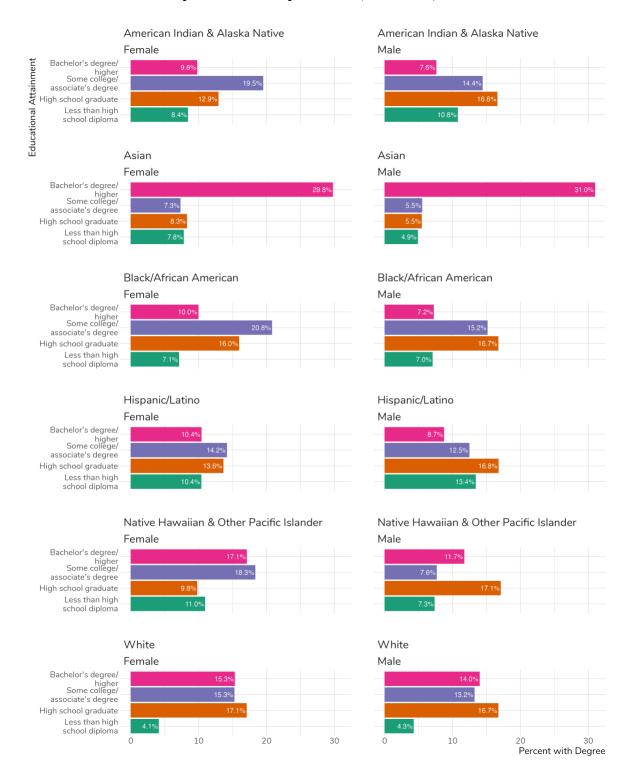
By 2015-2019 some changes were markedly evident. For example, now Hispanic/Latino women were most likely to have some college or an associate's degree (14.2% of all Hispanics/Latinos) whereas Hispanic/Latino men were most likely to be high school graduates (17.1% of all Hispanics/Latinos); in 2000 both were most likely to have less than a high school diploma.

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (2000)



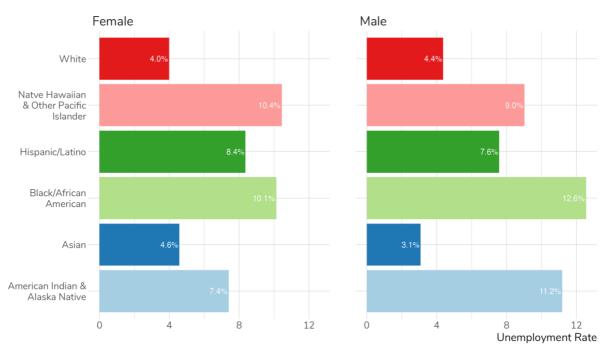
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Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (2015-2019)



Unemployment rates changed slightly for Hispanic/Latino women, decreasing from 8.4% in 2000 to 7.5% in 2015-2019. Hispanic/Latino men saw a smaller decrease in their unemployment rate, a drop from 7.6% in 2000 to 7.3% in 2015-2019. Further, whereas Hispanic/Latino women had the third highest unemployment rate in 2000 (with Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander women first with 10.4% and Black/African American women second with 10.1%), by 2015-2019 they had dropped to the fourth highest rate – now behind American Indian and Alaskan Native women in the third place. Hispanic/Latino men had the fourth highest rate in 2000 and remained the fourth highest in 2015-2019.

Unemployment Rate by Sex and Race/Ethnicity (2000)

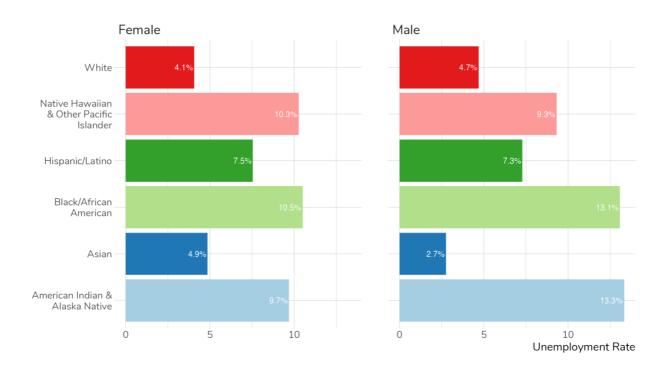


Data: Decennial Census of Population and Housing 2000

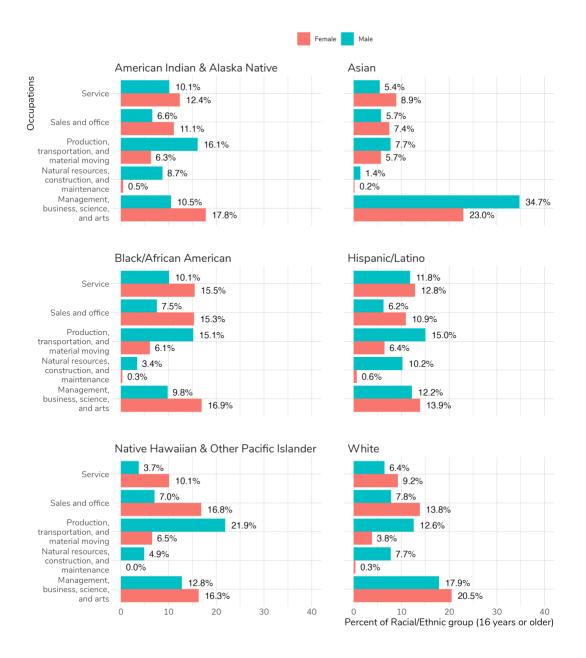
There are notable differences in the occupations that appear to be more or less common for Hispanic/Latino men and women, versus occupations pursued more often by the other racial/ethnic groups. In particular, Hispanic/Latino men are seen most often in production, transportation, and material moving (15.0%), followed by management, business, science, and arts (12.2%), service (11.8%), natural resources, construction, and maintenance (10.2%), with sales and office (6.2%) being the least commonly seen occupation.

Hispanic/Latino women are found most often in management, business, science, and arts (13.9%), service (12.8%), sales and office (10.9%), production, transportation, and material moving (6.4%), and least of all in natural resources, construction, and maintenance (0.6%).

Unemployment Rate by Sex and Race/Ethnicity (2015-2019)



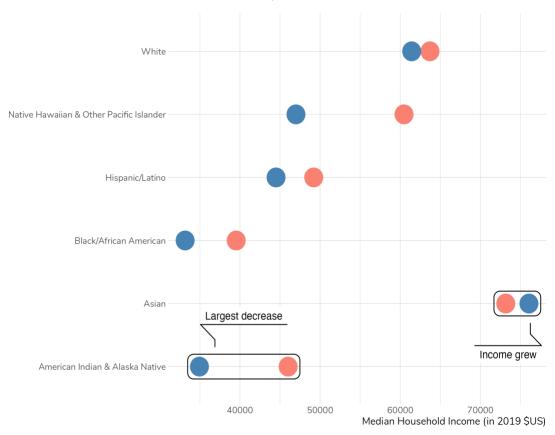
Occupations by Sex and Race/Ethnicity (2015-2019)



The distribution of median household income (measured here in 2019 \$US) changed between the 2000 and 2015-2019, and in markedly different ways for some racial/ethnic groups. Specifically, only one group saw median household income increase over this period – Asian households; for them median household income rose from \$73,160 in 2000 to \$76,054 in 2015-2019. All other groups saw decreases, some more than others. For example, American Indian & Alaska Native households saw the largest absolute decline (from \$46,008 in 2000 to \$34,943 in 2015-2019). The smallest decline was experienced by White households, dropping from \$63,705 in 2000 to \$61.427 in 2015-2019.

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity (2000 vs. 2019)

The steelblue circle represents the 2019 estimate while the salmon circle represents the 2000 estimate.



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